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RUEAHL/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
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DEPT FOR CA/FPP, CA/EX, CA/OCS, DS/CR/OCI
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION UNITS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRDKIRFCVISCMGTKOCIASECPHUMSMIGEG](#)

SUBJECT: COPTIC CHOIR BOYS UNCOVERED AS INTENDING IMMIGRANTS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Cairo Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) uncovered a scheme to have young men pose as Coptic choir boys in order to be issued visas for travel to the United States. The applicants used bogus letters from churches in Egypt and the United States to facilitate the fraud. Egyptian State Security Investigative Services (SSIS) made arrests in the case. End Summary.

Keen Eye of ELO starts the ball rolling

¶2. (SBU) An ELO doing visa interviews informed the Fraud Prevention Manager (FPM) of four different applicants he suspected of presenting bogus documentation. The A/RSO-I confirmed that the invitation letter from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chicago was fraudulent by speaking directly with administrative staff there. FPU Investigators also spoke with a priest in Upper Egypt who claimed no knowledge of the letter.

They can't sing or bake

¶3. (SBU) The FPM and A/RSO-I interviewed the four young men separately. All admitted they were not part of a Coptic choir and one individual admitted that he had no knowledge of baking (his application listed him as the "baker of the holy bread.") They all stated they intended to permanently reside in the United States and they paid around USD 12,000 each to a travel agent in order to facilitate the fraud. The travel agent provided them with bogus documentation and coached them on what to say during the interview. All the applicants wanted to reside in the US for economic reasons, and they planned to go to a Coptic Church in the Chicago area for further assistance upon arrival.

Arrests

¶4. (SBU) The A/RSO-I alerted SSIS who arrested the four young men as they exited the Embassy, and subsequently arrested the owner of a local travel agency who was involved. During questioning by SSIS, this individual admitted to receiving the bogus documentation from another person who was also subsequently detained by SSIS. The second individual outlined a smuggling network that funneled young Coptic men out of Egypt to Spain, Australia and the United States. He stated that members of the Coptic Church provided assistance in the form of bogus invitation letters and church groups.

¶5. (SBU) The FPM alerted counterparts at the Spanish and Australian embassies while using the CCD to find other possible cases fitting the profile. A text search located five other young men who were issued visas to travel as a Coptic Choir group with the same letters of invitation from churches in the United States and Upper Egypt. The Department of Homeland Security's Arrival Departure Information System (ADIS) showed two of the five had already traveled to the United States. Phone calls to the other three revealed the numbers on the DS-156 to be bogus. The visas were revoked electronically,

lookouts created in CLASS and airline contacts informed. However, a week later the FPU found out that the young men had already traveled to the United States and promptly claimed asylum.

16. (SBU) The FPU continues to investigate other possible church groups that may have been issued visas based on bogus documentation.